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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

**Letter dated 18 March 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to convey to you information on the State programme entitled "The year of the healthy child" adopted in the Republic of Uzbekistan (see annex).

I would appreciate your circulating the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 65.

(Signed) Ildar Shigabudinov
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Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan



**Annex to the letter dated 18 March 2014 from the Chargé
d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

[Original: Russian]

2014 declared the Year of the Healthy Child in Uzbekistan

At the initiative of President Islam Karimov, 2014 was declared the Year of the Healthy Child in the Republic of Uzbekistan. A State programme entitled "Year of the Healthy Child" was adopted. This was a logical continuation of a socially oriented public policy whose priority since the earliest days of Uzbek independence has been to raise a younger generation that is harmoniously developed, physically healthy and spiritually mature. The objectives reflected in the names of previous years, including the Year of the Mother and Child, the Year of Youth, the Year of the Harmoniously Developed Generation and the Year of the Family, are fully in line with that noble aim, which has enormous importance as a cherished dream of the Uzbek people. What they want above all is to raise healthy and fully developed children with a happy and prosperous future.

An enormous amount of thoughtful work has been done thus far and a number of programmes have been implemented nationwide, primarily the Healthy Mother-Healthy Child programme, which addresses challenges of paramount importance for the development of our country and society. It is crucial that these noble activities — carried out for the sake of our children, our people, and our future — are sustainable and that they continue to expand. They are yielding clear and convincing results.

For example, the radical reform of the health-care system included the development of a national model for mother and child health care whose effectiveness has been recognized worldwide. Through the establishment of specialized medical centres and an extensive network of primary health-care institutions, including rural health posts, and the transition to a family medicine approach, all Uzbeks, and especially women and children living in rural areas, have been given access to skilled medical care. Over the past 10 years, more than \$750 million has been invested to modernize prevention and treatment institutions and equip them with the latest technology. In the years since independence, maternal mortality has decreased by a factor of 3.1 and infant mortality has decreased by a factor of 3.2 in Uzbekistan. Thanks to the mother and child screening programme, the number of children born with congenital abnormalities has decreased by a factor of 1.8 since 2000. Today, 92 per cent of Uzbek children meet the World Health Organization's child growth standards. According to the ratings of the Save the Children organization, Uzbekistan ranks among the top 10 countries in the world for children's health care.

The great attention given in our country to the education of a harmoniously developed generation is clearly reflected in the results of the national staff training programme and the State national programme for development of school education. It is well-known that Uzbekistan has introduced a compulsory 12-year education system that meets international quality standards. General education schools have received a total of over 2.8 trillion sums, while children's schools of music and art

have received over 488 billion sums in 2009 for construction and improvement of infrastructure and equipment.

Sport is an integral element in raising a harmoniously developed young generation in Uzbekistan. A unique system has been set up to make sport more appealing to children and adolescents, especially girls, and to promote a healthy way of life. Modern sports centres are being built not only in cities but also in more remote areas. During the period 2003-2013, 1,816 sports facilities were commissioned, which has supported the mass involvement of children in systematic sporting activities and improved their health. Today in Uzbekistan more than 30 sports are regularly practised by about 2 million children, including 842,000 girls.

Great significance is attached to promoting spirituality in society and educating children in national and universal values.

Life, moreover, now poses new challenges in the critical area of raising the young generation. For example, there are still pressing issues to address to expand preventive measures and improve the quality of medical services, especially in rural areas. There is also a need to improve the quality of premarital medical tests and increase the accountability of the experts who conduct them. Another significant challenge is to improve preschool educational institutions and strengthen the institution of the family.

At the same time, the public health-care system bears a high degree of responsibility for establishing children's health. In that connection, greater attention will be paid in 2014 to further improving infrastructure by equipping medical facilities, primarily those engaged in maternal and child health care, with the most advanced equipment and providing them with qualified staff.

Of course, the medical culture of the general population remains an important issue as an important factor in raising healthy children.

The national Year of the Healthy Child programme outlines a package of measures primarily designed to address these pressing issues.

In 2014, all of these efforts will be taken to a higher level as the State programme is implemented. The programme focuses on broad measures to further support the development of a physically healthy, spiritually mature and harmoniously developed generation of young people who can think independently, are intellectually capable, have extensive knowledge and a modern outlook, and can take on responsibility for the fate and future of the country and mobilize all State and social forces and capacities for that purpose.

The programme consists of seven sections and 125 actions that cover all issues relating to the birth, raising and education of children, supporting a healthy atmosphere in the family and its economic and spiritual and moral foundations, and enhancing the effectiveness of the funds allocated to the social sector.

Primarily it defines measures to further improve the legislative and regulatory environment and develop new provisions and principles that create a procedural and institutional context conducive to a healthy and harmoniously developed generation.

The programme provides for the drafting of eight pieces of legislation. They include a draft law on the protection of children from information detrimental to their physical and spiritual development, an amended version of the Physical

Education and Sports Act, a draft law on disease control and prevention, an amendment and supplement to the Act on Education in the Republic of Uzbekistan and an amended version of the Act on Principles of Youth Policy.

In particular, the new legislation on the protection of children from information detrimental to their physical and spiritual development will provide effective legal mechanisms that protect children from the impact of destructive and psychologically traumatizing information and prevent the mass media from promoting cruelty or violence.

The national Year of the Healthy Child programme identifies priorities that include the establishment of a loving family environment with mutual respect and high ethical and moral values, financial support for young families, protection for motherhood and childhood, promotion of maternal and children's health, establishment of the necessary conditions for personal fulfilment and alleviation of women's domestic tasks.

To ensure broader access to quality medical services for women, children and adolescents, week-long clinics are held on a monthly basis to promote health and to provide thorough medical screening for 145,000 people in remote and inaccessible areas. The clinics are staffed by experts from the country's leading clinics.

The construction of new family polyclinics, health resorts and rural health centres continues, while efforts are being made to improve the infrastructure of existing facilities.

The programme provides for improving the infrastructure of 130 cultural and leisure centres, the establishment of 15 new cultural and recreational parks, and the restoration and repair of 29 existing facilities throughout the country.

Great importance is attached to improving women's living conditions and alleviating their domestic tasks by increasing the national production of household appliances and making consumer credit available for their purchase. There are plans to open centres for household and personal services, including beauty salons, sewing and maintenance workshops and other business enterprises, in remote villages in 194 regions of Uzbekistan.

The efforts to provide rural families with comfortable accommodation and improve their living conditions and quality of life will be taken to a qualitatively new level. In 2014, an additional 11,000 single-family houses based on standard designs will be constructed. Two thousand young families will be offered interest-free loans for housing construction and the purchase of domestically manufactured durable goods. A number of new projects will improve water supply and sewage systems in regional capitals and rural communities.

There are plans to implement a package of measures in 2014 to further improve the conditions for the birth of healthy children and promote children's health. These measures include the construction and provision of sophisticated medical equipment for a modern children's multi-specialty centre (level IV), a facility which has no counterpart in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Construction or remodelling is planned for a number of specialized units of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Paediatrics, the clinic of the Tashkent Paediatric Medical Institute, 13 provincial multi-specialty children's medical centres, 62 district medical associations, and other medical and medical-social facilities. They will all be equipped with modern diagnostic and

therapeutic equipment to provide children with specialized and high-technology health care in a manner consistent with international standards.

The prevention of contagious diseases is of course one of the most effective means of ensuring public health and epidemiological well-being. The child immunization programme will be improved through the phased introduction of new vaccines for various infections. The scale of preventive vaccination coverage will be expanded, on the basis of the national vaccination calendar, to include at least 97 per cent of the cohort.

In the course of 2014, in-depth health screening and iodine treatment is planned for about 6.6 million children in preschools and schools. In rural areas, 400,000 pregnant women will be provided with special multivitamin tablets free of charge, to support their reproductive health.

The national Year of the Healthy Child programme includes specific components for the gradual strengthening of infrastructure at preschool facilities, including major maintenance and provision of equipment, as well as the construction of new facilities. There are plans to prepare and implement innovative programmes to prepare children for school and support their full intellectual, moral, aesthetic and physical development.

The programme to establish the *Barkamol Avlod* children's centres provides for major repairs and equipment for 66 such centres. This will enable more children to engage in creative activities, including creative technical activities.

Measures to improve the quality of elementary school teaching include the revision of programmes and textbooks for grades 1 to 4 and preparation of the relevant teachers' manuals.

In the academic year 2014/2015, 25 million copies of textbooks and teaching aids (575 titles) will be provided for 2.6 million schoolchildren.

The national general educational electronic library project will support children's intellectual development. It includes the establishment of a centre where various learning and teaching materials can be converted into electronic formats, a centre for multimedia information resources, and an integrated information and library network which by 2020 will include all information and library facilities in Uzbekistan.

There is special concern in Uzbekistan for children deprived of parental care and children with disabilities. Measures will be taken over the period 2015-2017 to gradually strengthen the infrastructure of the *Mehribonlik* (children's homes), specialized boarding schools and preschools, and to radically improve the educational process, taking into account the best practices in developed countries.

A number of outstanding intellectual, creative and sports activities are planned for 2014. They include — *Barkamol Avlod* sporting events in the Namangan province, national children's art festivals, the "melodies of our homeland" international competition for folk instruments and the "youngest inventor" competition.

The key tasks set out in the State programme include renovation and major repairs for 380 general education schools with 60,100 students, equipping them with computer and laboratory equipment and other infrastructure. There are also plans for construction, renovation and major repairs of 161 vocational and academic institutions, 48 children's music and art schools and 110 children's sports facilities.

Uzbekistan attaches great importance to the teaching of foreign languages to children. School language laboratories are provided with learning tools enhanced by modern information and communications technology for this purpose.

Efforts to support primary school pupils are continuing. For example, 586,900 first-grade pupils will be provided with training supplies and 6.5 million textbooks, while more than 500,000 second-grade students at general education schools will receive free foreign-language textbooks with multimedia applications.

Children's holiday camps will provide 35,700 free and 280,000 reduced-price places for boys and girls to enjoy their leisure and recreational activities during the summer vacation.

There are plans for restoration work at zoos in Tashkent and Termez and the botanical gardens in Tashkent, Samarkand and Fergana, the opening of subdivisions of the Tashkent Zoo, construction of a water park in the city of Zarafshan, and also major repairs to the national puppet theatre and the "Tomosha" children's musical theatre.

There are many planned activities that reflect the inherent qualities of the people of Uzbekistan, such as their compassion and their desire to help those in need. The State budget will fund the provision of 516,900 sets of winter clothing and 3.1 million copies of textbooks and teaching aids free of charge to children from low-income families. Free trips to Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Tashkent will be organized for students from *Mehribonlik* homes and children from low-income families so that they can familiarize themselves with Uzbekistan's rich historical and cultural heritage. Trips to museums, zoos and botanical gardens will also be organized.

In November 2014, an international forum will be held in Tashkent. The subject is social partnership to benefit children: best domestic and foreign practice.

Uzbekistan's urgent challenges can of course only be effectively met through joint efforts and concerted action from families, schools, health systems, government and social organizations, non-governmental organizations, citizens' self-governing bodies and other civil society institutions.

The State programme gives particular attention to strengthening the role of the *mahalla* (local community) institution and expanding its rights and capacities for raising healthy children and providing timely and targeted financial and moral support for families, especially young families.

The list of benefits outlined in the national Year of the Healthy Child programme extends even further.

As noted by President Islam Karimov, the attention and general concern shown for our children, the young generation, reflects above all Uzbekistan's belief in tomorrow and is a sign of its overwhelming and fundamental respect for the people.

This is further confirmed by the national Year of the Healthy Child programme, which has been allocated 4,509.2 billion sums for its activities, the equivalent of \$302.9 million. Its implementation will be another important step by Uzbekistan along the path of far-reaching reform with the main purpose of protecting human rights and well-being.